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ABSTRACT

One of the most enduring challenges facing the public school system is decreasing the dropout rate. The highest rate of growth population in the future will be among the groups who are at greatest risk of dropping out of school. This paper outlines what school officials can do to decrease the dropout rate. The suggestions for dropout prevention include: (1) modifying the instructional environment; (2) establishing effective school membership; (3) initiating career academies; (4) developing supportive school board policies; (5) determining students' learning styles; (6) considering community based collaboratives; (7) establishing a case management intervention system; (8) creating a mentoring network; (9) establishing a school-within-a-school; and (10) using negative-sanction policies. (Contains 3 tables and 77 references.) (Author/SLD)

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High School Dropouts:

Issues and Solutions

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Abstract

One of the most enduring challenges facing our public school system is decreasing the dropout rate. The highest rate of growth population in the future will be among the groups who are at greatest risk of dropping out of school. This paper outlines what school officials can do to decrease the dropout rate. The suggestions for dropout prevention include modifying the instructional environment, establishing effective school membership, initiating career academies, developing supportive school board policies, determining students' learning styles, considering community based collaboratives, establishing a case management intervention system, creating a mentoring network, establishing a school within a school, and using negative-sanction policies.

High School Dropouts:

Issues and Solutions

Failure to complete high school has serious social and economic consequences for our nation. For example, dropouts currently cost the United States an estimated $260 billion annually in lost earnings, taxes, and social services (U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2000). In any given year, the unemployment rate among high school dropouts is nearly twice as high as it is for high school graduates who do not enter college. The median income of dropouts who find full-time employment is half the income of high school graduates (Center for the Study of Social Policy, 2000). More than one-half of the United States prison population are high school dropouts, compared to one-quarter of the general population (Kirsch, Jungeblut, Jenkins, & Kolstad, 1998). And, nearly one-half of all heads of households receiving welfare support from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFFDC) have never completed high school (U.S. Congress, House Committee on Ways and Means, 2000). Furthermore, dropouts have lower rates of intergenerational mobility (Morton, 1998; Stewart, 1999), lower levels of academic skills (McCombs, Whisler, & Erlandson, 1997; Stewart, 1999), and poorer levels of mental health (Brusca-Vega, Yawkey, & Gonzalez, 1996; Stewart, 1999) and physical health (Morton, 1998; Stewart, 1999) than do nondropouts.

In the past four decades, the dropout rate has improved, but it still remains at a crisis level. The average high school attrition rate in 1960 was 32%. It decreased to 21% in 1970, but by 1980 it had increased to 26%. Since 1980, the national average fluctuated yearly; in 1995, approximately one-fourth of all high school students dropped out of school before graduation (Gordon Press Publishers, 1999; Kaufman, 1998; National Center for Education Statistics, 2000). But despite the best efforts to stem the flow of students leaving high school prior to graduation,

students continue to drop out (Education Department, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, National Center for Education Research Statistics, 2000; Gordon Press Publishers, 1999; Kaufman, 1998). School officials must begin to address the dropout problem on a broad and substantial scale if we are to reach the goal of a 90% high school graduate rate by the end of the year 2000 (Goals 2000: Educate America Act of 1994). One important aspect of effective dropout prevention is identification of students who are most likely to drop out (Kronick & Hargis, 1998; Morton, 1998; Skromme, VanAllen, & Bensen, 1998). Clearly, we want to know that our dropout prevention programs are targeting the students who are most at risk (Bonilla & Goss, 1997; Brusca-Vega, Yawkey, & Gonzalez, 1996; McWhirter, 1997; Peterson, 1998; Sprick, Sprick, & Garrison, 1998). This paper outlines what school officials can do to decrease the dropout rate. The first section of the paper examines the growing cultural diversity of our nation. This is followed by several creative strategies that may assist school officials in dropout prevention.

Growing Cultural Diversity

The 21st century will see greater ethnic and cultural diversity in the United States than in any other period in American history (Naylor, 1997; Sitarem & Prosser, 1998). The highest rate of growth population in the future will be among the groups who have been served least well by our public schools (Lunenburg, 1995; Lunenburg & Irby, 1999; Lunenburg & Ornstein, 2000). Although the majority of today's American schoolchildren are white, the past ten years have seen a rapid increase in the number of immigrant and minority students. For example, in 1980 one out of every five students belonged to a minority group. Today, that number has increased to more than one in four. And according to estimates, nearly one in three American schoolchildren will fall within the Census Bureau's designation of "minority" by the year 2000 (U.S. Bureau of the

Census, 1991).

The increase in cultural diversity over the past decade is the result of immigration from non-European countries, resulting from the Immigration Act of 1965 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, Economics and Statistics Administration, 1991). According to the Population Reference Bureau (2000), the number of school-age immigrant children in America has risen to between 2.5 and 2.9 million, with the largest numbers of immigrants coming from Mexico, Asia, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

The United States will continue to grow, and immigration will continue to be a major source of that growth. Furthermore, growth will be concentrated in nonwhite populations in the suburbs of the 25 largest metropolitan areas. "Peripheral Cities" (self-contained suburbs outside the metropolitan centers) will become common. This phenomenon will lead to further destruction of the inner cities as financial resources, talent, and industry continue to move to the suburbs and Peripheral Cities. The problem of retaining and attracting middle classes of whatever racial and ethic group back to the inner cities will become difficult if not impossible to achieve (Hodgkinson, 1998a). Moreover, since most voters will live in the suburbs contiguous to the 25 largest metropolitan areas, it will be easier for most political leaders to ignore inner city schools - the schools that most need assistance from the state and federal government.

A Demographic Look at Tomorrow

The nation increased by 22.1 million persons in 1990, reaching a total of 248.7 million that year. Different racial and ethnic groups increased at vastly different rates, as shown in Table 1. The makeup of the United States population by race and ethnicity in 1990 is shown in Table 2 (Hodgkinson, 1998b). (This is the most recent statistic on race and ethnicity in the United States, since data on the next census will not be published until the year 2001.)

Insert Tables 1 and 2 about here

Just as different racial and ethnic groups increased the population at different rates, so did the different regions throughout the United States. Ninety percent of the growth in the United States occurred in the South and West, but three states got one-half the nation's growth: Texas, California, and Florida. Growth was bicoastal as well, with Georgia, the Carolinas, and Virginia making large gains in the U.S. population. The heartland and mid-Atlantic states decreased in population. Projections indicate that by the next census in 2000, Texas will become the second largest state in the nation following California, and New York will move down into the third spot (Hodgkinson, 1998b).

By 2010, 11 states plus the District of Columbia will have significant minority school-age populations. (See Table 3.) Approximately, one-half of the nation's 64.4 million school-age youth will reside in these 12 regions. As shown in Table 3, one sees many of our largest states as well as some states in the deep South on the list.

Insert Table 3 about here

Furthermore, by 2010, 32.6 million of the nation's 62.6 million children will be in only nine states: Texas, California, Florida, New York, Illinois, Georgia, Michigan, Ohio, and Pennsylvania. Some of these nine states will have little ethnic diversity, while California, Texas, and Florida will gain 1.8 million youth. More than one-half of the youth population in these three

states will be nonwhite before 2010 (Hodgkinson, 1998b). Yet, in all three states, the makeup of teachers is not representative of the racial and ethnic diversity of the school-age youth. While over one-half of all students in these three states will be nonwhite in 2010, about 19% of the teachers in California, 15% in Florida, and 22% in Texas will be nonwhite (Hodgkinson, 1998b). These three states have among the highest dropout rates in the nation (Hodgkinson, 1998b). Helping culturally diverse students reach their full potential will be one of the biggest challenges for schools in the twenty-first century.

Dropout Prevention

The importance of dropout prevention as a high-priority item on the national agenda has resulted in several plans and programs to address the issue. Ten creative strategies that may assist school officials in dropout prevention include the following: modify the instructional environment, strengthen school membership, initiate career academies, develop supportive school board policies, determine students' learning styles, consider community-based collaboratives, establish case management intervention, create a mentoring network, establish a school-within-a-school, and use negative-sanction policies (Lunenburg & Irby, 1999).

Strategy 1: Modify the Instructional Environment.

A primary strategy for dropout prevention is to begin to assess current practices in classrooms. Teachers need to be aware of at-risk student research findings and best practices employed with the students. Following is an overview of information, so that teachers can begin to assess their own classroom practices and alter their instructional environments.

At-risk students perceive that they are treated differently from high-achieving students. Thomas Good (1987) and others (Lehr and Harris, 1991) recently reviewed the literature on the differential treatment of high-achieving and low-achieving students by their teachers. This differential treatment is harmful to at-risk students. Frequently these students

- Are called on less often
- Are given less wait time to answer questions
- Are rewarded for inappropriate behavior or incorrect answers
- Are questioned primarily at the knowledge/comprehension levels
- Are criticized more often for failure
- Are given less praise
- Are given less feedback
- Are interrupted more often
- Are given fewer opportunities to learn new material
- Demand less
- Evidence less acceptance and use of ideas
- Are given less eye contact and other nonverbal communication of responsiveness.

The aforementioned teacher behaviors define a pattern of diminished expectations for at-risk students' ability to learn. At-risk students sense the teacher's lower regard for their personal worth as learners, come to believe it, and live up to those expectations (Acheson and Gall, 1998).

Strategy 2: Establish Effective School Membership.

In a study of schools with lower than expected dropout rates, Wehlage, Rutter, Smith, Lesko, and Fernandez (1989) determined that successful schools try to create a sense of membership for at-risk students. Membership, according to Wehlage et al., depends on social bonding - the extent to which an individual forms meaningful and satisfying links with significant others in the school environment.

Students interact with their school environment by developing relationships with

teachers, peers, and the school itself. Principals can strengthen student social bonding to school by strengthening positive interactions within these three relationships.

Strengthen Students' Connections to Teachers. When students believe teachers care about them, they are more inclined to want to conform to the standards for achievement and behavior established by the school. To promote this bonding, teachers can (1) establish mentoring relationships, (2) create small communities of support, and (3) make a commitment to all students regardless of background.

Strengthen Students' Connections to Peers. A second strategy for strengthening student bonding to school involves students' relationships with peers. The following can create strong peer bonds: (1) encourage participation in co-curricular activities, (2) socialize new students into the culture of the school, and (3) engage students in peer mentoring programs.

Strengthen Students' Connections to the School. A third strategy for strengthening student's bonding to school is by linking the student to the school itself. Techniques that link students to school include: (1) make school rules explicit, fair, and equitable; apply them consistently, (2) establish social contracts as a means of discipline, (3) give students some control over their environment, and (4) socialize students into the school early (Arhar, 1992; Lincoln & Higgins, 1991).

Strategy 3: Initiate Career Academies.

Career academies, for the most part, have emerged in urban school districts, where the dropout rate and unemployment are high. As a result their primary goal has been to serve students at risk of leaving high school before graduation (Archer, Weinbaum, and Montesano, 1989; Burnett, 1992; Stern, Raby, & Dayton, 1992). Many students recruited for academies have come from poor backgrounds, have poor attendance records and grades, and have not

accumulated sufficient course credit in their studies to progress in their grade level. Academies are nearly evenly divided between males and females and contain high percentages of African American and Hispanic students (Burnett, 1992; Dayton, Weisberg, & Stern, 1989).

Most career academies across the country share a number of attributes. In general, they (1) are organized as schools-within-schools, with a small community of students and a small, self-contained set of five to ten counselors and teachers - one of whom acts as the program's "lead teacher"; (2) recruit students to volunteer for the program; (3) focus on broadly-defined career themes, such as computers, electronics, or health, rather than on the job-specific outlines of traditional vocational education; (4) choose career areas with growing demands and with good employment opportunities in the local market; (5) integrate academic and vocational curricula and use block-scheduling to keep students together in cohort groups throughout the day and throughout the entire three- or four-year program; (6) eliminate tracking by setting rigorous academic courses into the context of occupational training, giving students the option to continue their education after graduation; (7) make work experience a component of the educational process by systematically exposing students to job interviews and issues of work ethics and behavior; (8) are sustained by high levels of involvement by local businesses, as well as strong parental support; and (9) receive significant outside funding, from both business and government sources (Burnett, 1992; Dayton et al., 1989; Stern, et al., 1992).

Because academy students progress as a group, classes from the beginning to the end of the entire three - or four -year program can be designed as a sequence rather than as an assortment of unrelated units (Burnett, 1992; Stern, et al., 1992). Such program-wide coordination, enhanced by the academy's small class size and cohesive student body, allows the creation of strong career development programs. Career academies typically integrate academic

and vocational courses - preparing students for college as well as for careers. All classes - technical as well as academic - combine the cognitive rigor of academics with the hands-on orientation of vocational training. Academies generate consistently higher expectations for student success, and students in the academies must meet all state and local requirements for graduation (Archer, et al., 1989; Burnett, 1992).

Strategy 4: Develop Supportive School Board Policies.

To help at-risk students graduate from high school, school boards can establish appropriate and supportive policies. Below are some specific suggestions to keep at-risk students in school (VanderMolen & Nolan, 1993):

1. *Require central office administrators to make programs for at-risk students an ongoing priority.* School district goals should include measurable objectives for helping at-risk students. The objectives might include raising the graduation rate, improving participation in cocurricular activities, and lowering absenteeism.

2. *Require district-level administrators to assign the same quality of staff for at-risk programs as for other school programs.* In many school districts, at-risk programs become dumping grounds for faculty members and students.

3. *Hold administrators, faculty, and students accountable for the quality of at-risk programs.* Frequently, school boards do not demand the same level of quality for alternative schools as for regular high schools. Make sure that alternative high schools have the same access to technological equipment as do the regular high schools.

4. *Insist that all school district departments provide equal services to at-risk students.* At-risk students should have the same access to support services - transportation, graduation activities, etc. - as the general student population.

5. *Permit alternative methods for meeting curriculum requirements.* For example, if the school district requires students to demonstrate 85% proficiency on mathematics competency tests, teachers of at-risk students should develop individual education programs for students to reach the same goal. New asynchronous learning interactions through the internet allow for open learning; i.e., the student decides when, where, and how to interact with the learning community.

6. *Permit budget flexibility for alternative programs.* Most school districts base budget allocations for a fiscal year on enrollments as of a specific date - generally at the beginning of the school year. However, enrollment in the at-risk program increases throughout the year as students who cannot meet the standards in the regular school transfer into the alternative school program.

7. *Permit flexibility in scheduling.* Most states require a minimum number of minutes of classroom instruction to fulfill graduation requirements. Without deviating from the state's requirements, permit at-risk students flexibility in meeting them.

Strategy 5: Determine the Students' Learning Style.

Knowledge of a student's learning type can help teachers in retaining at-risk students. One instrument that can assist in determining this is The Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) (Myers-Briggs, 1962, 1975) based on Carl Jung's (1923) theory of psychological type. The MBTI identifies the predominant manner of intaking, processing, and outputting information. The MBTI yields 16 different type combinations from four basic preferences: Extroversion or Introversion (EI), Sensing or Intuition (SN), Thinking or Feeling (TF), and Judgment or Perception (JP). Separate studies show that student interest, application, and academic success are positively related to the presentation of material that is congruent with the individual's learning style (Carbo, 1984, 1987a, 1987b; Hengstler, Reichard, Uhl, & Goldman, 1981; Kiersey

& Bates, 1978; Maxwell, 1981; McCaulley, 1981; McCaulley & Natter, 1974; ; Nisbet, Ruble, & Schurr, 1981; Robyak & Patton, 1977; Van, 1992).

Conventional school settings typically address the learning style of the Introverted-Intuitive-Thinking-Judging student. The opposite of this type, the Extroverted-Sensing-Feeling-Perception pupil, is at-risk of dropping out (Kiersey & Bates, 1978; Van, 1992). The extrovert's need for the company of others often take priority over individual study. The senser values application over theory. Feeling students crave personal involvement which is incongruent with didactic forms of instruction. Perception learners have difficulty reaching closure and do not function well in formally structured classrooms. Perception individuals require assistance in developing listening, critical-thinking, and decision-making skills and in accepting academic routine and classroom structure (Nisbet et al., 1982; Van, 1992).

In review of the aforementioned research on learning style compatibility with conventional academic milieus, what can teachers do to accommodate the high-risk student? Classroom instruction which addresses the various learning styles of students increases the chances of scholastic success for all learners (Lawrence, 1979; McCaulley, 1981; Nisbet, et al., 1982; Van, 1992). Modifications in the curriculum and teaching methods can be made so that the full spectrum of learning styles can be accommodated (Van, 1992). Of course, other learning style instruments and research, such as Gardner (1985) and Dunn and Dunn (1992a; 1992b), could be investigated by school leaders to determine learning type or style of the students.

Strategy 6: Consider Community-Based Collaboratives.

School systems across the nation are experiencing an unprecedented movement to form collaboratives with institutions in their larger communities to achieve educational reforms aimed at dropout prevention (Barr & Parrett, 1995; Dillick, 1953; Institute for Educational Leadership,

1986; Jones, 1992; Levine, 1988; McMullan, 1987; Upton, 1984). Education stakeholders generally recognize that only through collaboration - schools working with other institutions to address common areas of concern - can the multitude of student and school needs be addressed (Fantini, 1985; Jones, 1992; Passow, 1985). One example is the community-based organization (CBO).

The growth of school-CBO collaboratives is associated with the development of broader community involvement in education. This involvement has been ignited by the growing importance of education (Boyer, 1983) and diminishing resources for schools (Fantini, 1985), coupled with the school dropout problem (Jones, 1992; Levin, 1985).

One such CBO is the New York City Attendance Improvement Dropout Prevention (AIDP) program. One of the major goals of the AIDP program is to engage schools in collaborative initiatives with community-based organizations to prevent students from dropping out of school (Jones, 1992). The AIDP program was launched in 29 New York City middle schools with a $13 million joint budget allocation from the New York State Legislature, the New York City Mayor's Office, and the New York City Central Board of Education. The types of services provided to the students enrolled in the AIDP program at each of the schools include

(a) Additional guidance and counseling services in the form of individual and group counseling sessions;

(b) Additional health services such as diagnostic screening of targeted students in physical, psychological, and educational areas; and referral for appropriate follow-up;

(c) Attendance outreach to ensure the carrying out of home visits and parent conferences between teachers and parents whose children were enrolled in the program;

(d) Alternative educational activities that incorporated basic skills instruction with

individualized attention and after-school academic and social support programming (Jones, 1992, p. 499).

Strategy 7: Establish a Case Management Intervention System.

Case Management Intervention has been used as a tool to reduce the rate of high school dropouts. The Albany City School District, in conjunction with the State University of New York at Albany (SUNYA) established such a program. The program consists of four components: academic assistance, social services, employment services, and a computerized database resource file (Gaudette & Nicoli, 1992).

The academic assistance component evaluates, assists, and monitors students' academic progress. Working in collaboration with teachers and school counselors, the program coordinator identifies areas for remediation, and an individual tutorial regimen is established. At-risk students are assigned a tutor for one-on-one academic instruction. The tutors are students from the teacher training program at SUNYA. The tutors provide at-risk students with basic instruction in core subjects, individualized attention in elective courses, encouragement, and positive reinforcement.

The social services component addresses the social pressures that interfere with students' educational goals. This component drew upon Community Service Project interns from SUNYA. Pairing at-risk students with SUNYA pre-service teachers produced mentoring relationships. Consequently, at-risk students received social skill development, crisis resolution techniques, and when needed, referrals to community agencies.

The employment services component connect at-risk students with short - and long - term employment services. This is provided through partnerships with the School and Business Alliance (SABA) and the Youth Internship Program (YIP) sponsored by the Hudson Valley

Community College. SABA provides employment related workshops and supervised work experiences designed to build employment skills and work history. YIP provides employment workshops, internships with local businesses, and connections to post-secondary education through the Hudson Valley Community College.

Case Management Intervention staff develop a computerized database resource file. The file contains descriptions of community resources including referral criteria and services available. Such a database enables the program coordinator to match students' needs with appropriate community services (Gaudette & Niccoli, 1992).

Strategy 8: Create a Mentoring Network.

Matching retirees with at-risk students is a cost-effective way to provide potential dropouts with adult role models. Several such mentoring programs exist (Freedman, 1989, 1994; Freedman & Jaffe, 1993). For example, the Teaching-Learning Communities (T-LC) Mentoring Program in Ann Arbor, Michigan, and other cities assigns retired adults as mentors and tutors to junior and senior high school students who are at-risk of dropping out. The program stresses the arts, career awareness, personal goal setting, consistent school attendance, and educational excellence.

School Volunteers for Boston (SVB) - which is similar to programs operating in such urban areas as Los Angeles, Dallas, New York, and San Francisco - places retired adult mentors in classrooms and after-school programs to tutor at-risk students in basic reading and mathematics, and participate in a variety of mentoring activities. The Teenage Parent Alternative Program (TAPA) in Lincoln, Michigan, pairs foster grandparents with teenage parents. The elder mentors help teach the young mothers about parenting and health care for their child, and also watch the child while the mother is in class (Freedman & Jaffe, 1993).

Two other programs that link adult mentors with at-risk students are People Against Losing Students (PALS) and Parents Reaching Out (PRO) in Tatum, Texas. The two programs together have three main thrusts: career awareness, academics, and parenting. Students in the programs get extra counseling and help from community volunteers and school personnel with career awareness, achieving class objectives, and the skills required to rear children.

Strategy 9: Establish a School Within a School.

School-within-a-school (SWS) initiatives typically are locally funded programs of instruction in basic skills, career guidance, and counseling support to meet the needs of at-risk junior and senior high school students. The school-within-a-school program calls for teachers to work as a team across academic disciplines, to meet and plan curriculum, the budget, in-house discipline, and enrichment activities. Students are drawn primarily from the larger school's attendance area and from populations that traditionally do poorly in high school and are underrepresented in college: African American, Hispanic, and other non-white students.

SWS program quidelines outline services that address academic, personal/social, and vocational growth of SWS students. SWS courses generally have the same objectives as the regular school curriculum. The same textbooks and evaluation measures are used for SWS classes. The primary modifications to the regular educational program are teaching strategies and the degree of individualization allowed by smaller class sizes. Social/emotional growth, an important goal of SWS programs, is promoted through cooperative learning, cross-age mentoring, traditional mentoring, life skills classes, service learning projects, SWS homerooms, and student-developed field trips, orientations, graduation ceremonies, and awards ceremonies (Gordon, 1993).

Ten elements that make SWS programs successful include the following:

1. *Application and assessment process.* Students must apply to SWS, explaining why they want to participate. Once admitted, their progress is monitored frequently using a variety of assessment measures.

2. *Low student-teacher ratio.* SWS classes are maintained at a student-teacher ratio of 15 to 1 maximum. The use of community volunteers helps to lower the ratio even more.

3. *Positive physical and mental environment.* SWS programs strive for library-like surroundings, with study carrels and large tables, decorated with plants and motivational posters on the walls.

4. *Appropriate curriculum.* The SWS curriculum parallels that used in the regular school program. Modifications in the curriculum and teaching methods are made so that the full spectrum of students' learning styles are accommodated.

5. *Structured environment.* Well-articulated policies and procedures foster a meaningful, purpose classroom atmosphere. Students make a commitment to the SWS program by signing contracts.

6. *Attendance incentives.* Daily attendance is mandatory. Parents are encouraged to call when students are absent. Teachers call parents when students are absent even one day.

7. *Connections with counselors.* To help keep students on track, counselors meet with them weekly to discuss the program, their progress, and peer and adult relationships.

8. *Cooperation with other teachers.* SWS faculty monitor and encourage students' progress in other classes through periodic reports and communication with other teachers.

9. *Parent conferences.* Conferences with parents are scheduled as needed. SWS faculty keep parents well informed concerning participants' progress.

10. *Community relations.* Successful SWS programs build bridges of support. Students tell

their friends. Parents lend their praise. Businesses invite students for tours of their facilities. Volunteers involved experience the benefits of a successful program firsthand (Nevares, 1992).

Strategy 10: Use State-Legislated Negative-Sanction Policies.

A radically different strategy is to invoke negative sanctions on the potential dropout (Toby & Armor, 1992). For example, in Wisconsin if a child fails to attend school regularly, the state reduces benefits to families on welfare. The sanction is designed to hold parents accountable for their children's attendance pattern. In West Virginia, a similar sanction policy began with a program that aims to decrease the dropout rate in that state by revoking the driver's license of any minor student who drops out of high school before graduation.

The West Virginia "no school, no drive" law attracted considerable attention across the nation. Now Arkansas, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, and other states have passed similar laws that require good school attendance records for new licensees and revoke the existing licenses of dropouts or those with poor attendance records who are under eighteen (Toby & Armor, 1992).

Summary

Failure to complete high school has serious social and economic consequences for our nation. For example, dropouts currently cost the United States an estimated $260 billion in lost earnings, taxes, and social services. Dropouts constitute 52% of those who receive welfare or are unemployed, 82% of the prison population, and 85% of the juveniles in court. Furthermore, dropouts have lower rates of intergenerational mobility, lower levels of academic skills, and poorer levels of mental and physical health than do nondropouts. The ten dropout prevention strategies presented here may help schools decrease the dropout rate, and, thus, eliminate some of the social and economic problems associated with high school dropouts.

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Table 1

Percent Change in U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity, 1980-1990

	1980-1990 Increase
Total, U.S.	9.8%
White, non-Hispanic	6.0%
Black	13.2%
Native American, Eskimo or Aleut	37.9%
Asian or Pacific Islander	107.8%
Hispanic (of any race)	53.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 2

U.S. Population by Race and Ethnicity – 1990

	Number	% of Total Population
U.S. Total	248,710	100.0
White, Non-Hispanic	187,137	75.2
Black*	29,986	12.1
Native American, Eskimo, Aleut*	1,959	0.8
Asian or Pacific Islander	7,247	2.9
Hispanic (of any race)	22,354	9.0

*Includes a small number of Hispanics.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

Table 3

Percent Nonwhite Youth* Projections for 2010 for Selected States

State	Percent Nonwhite	State	Percent Nonwhite
D.C.	93.2%	Louisiana	50.3%
Hawaii	79.5%	Mississippi	49.9%
Texas	56.9%	New Jersey	45.7%
California	56.9%	Maryland	42.7%
Florida	53.4%	Illinois	41.7%
New York	52.8%	South Carolina	40.1%
U.S.	38.2%		

*Age 0-17 years

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.